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CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Drop plastic straw ban for a year, says industry

Amul says paper straws can't be a viable alternative in the near term as their supply is very limited at present. The Centre's ban on single-use plastics, including plastic straws, is set to take effect on July 1. The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, which makes Amul products, requested the Centre to give it one year to set up facilities to make paper straws, which are not available in adequate quantities in domestic and international markets.

Prez poll date out, Murmu leads race in NDA

July 18 date set for elections, counting on July 21 if required; Kovind retires on July 24

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR
@ New Delhi

Draupadi Murmu

Arif Mohammad Khan

Rajnath Singh

Anandiben Patel

WITH the Election Commission on Thursday setting the ball rolling for Presidential elections on July 18, crystal gazing has begun within the ruling NDA on the likely successor to President Ram Nath Kovind, whose tenure ends on July 24.

There is speculation within the corridors of power that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would pick a tribal or a Muslim candidate for the highest office of the land. The names doing the rounds include former governor Draupadi Murmu (Jharkhand), serving governors Arif Mohammed Khan (Kerala), Anandiben Patel (UP), Anusuiya Uikey (Chhattisgarh), Thawar Chand Gehlot (Karnataka) and defence minister Rajnath Singh.

Murmu is said to be leading the race because she belongs to a tribal community and was the first governor in Jharkhand to complete a five-year term. She has good equations with not just Modi and the RSS but also with NDA allies. Murmu belongs to a Santal tribe in Odisha. "As the BJP has started increasing its outreach to the tribal voters ahead of the polls in six states and the next LS elections, the possibility of a tribal candidate can't be ruled out," a senior BJP leader said.

The other candidate in the race is Arif Mohammad Khan, specially in the wake of the diplomatic blowback from the Muslim world against the recent hate speech by a couple of BJP functionaries. "Both the names carry much political and electoral significance for the BJP. Murmu coul become India's first tribal woman President, if Arif Khan is considered for the post of vice president," said a BJP source.

Another name in the reckoning is Ansuiya Uikey, from poll-bound Madhya Pradesh. She belongs to a scheduled tribe.

Though Anandiben Patel's name is also in circulation, her chances are very slim as she hails from Gujarat. "How can both the PM and the President belong to the same state? This has a very little chance of her making it," a former party MP remarked.

K'taka to elect four members to RS today

Bengaluru: Karnataka is all set to elect four members to the Rajya Sabha on Friday. While the BJP has the numbers to win two seats comfortably and the Congress one seat, there is a tough fight on the cards for the fourth seat. The parties, especially the JDS, have their own apprehensions about cross-voting by their MLAs. The winning candidate has to get 45 votes to win a Rajya Sabha seat. While three candidates have the numbers, the fourth seat will depend on second preferential votes. P4

Banks up lending rates, Kotak hikes deposit rate

RAM SAHGAL @ Mumbai

HOURS after RBI hiked rates at which it lends to commercial banks, the ICICI Bank, Bank of India and Federal Bank raised their EMIs on floating rate home loans with immediate effect. A day after, on Thursday, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda followed suit. On the flip side, Kotak Mahindra Bank gave investors relief by raising deposit rates.

ICICI Bank hiked its external benchmark lending rate by 50 bps to 8.6%. This would raise the EMI on a ₹30 lakh home loan, payable over 20 years, to ₹26,244.88 from ₹25,280.23.

Bank of India raised its external benchmarked rate to 7.75% while RBL Bank raised it to 10%. Bank of Baroda increased its repo linked rate to 7.4%. PNB raised its repo linked lending rate to 7.4% from 6.9%. Federal Bank raised home loan rates up to ₹30 lakh for the salaried class to 8.55% and to 8.6% for those in the ₹30-75 lakh bracket. HDFC Ltd, too, increased its prime lending rate on housing loans by 50 basis points with effect from June 10.

For many borrowers, their obligations will only rise. This is because the share of external benchmark linked loans in total outstanding loans of scheduled commercial banks has risen to almost 40% while the share of loans linked to the base rate and MCLR has declined. P13

Centre advises state to increase testing, contain Covid spread

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

THE Union Health Ministry has sent out letters to five states, including Karnataka, asking them to follow a five-fold strategy and amp up testing. States that are closely being monitored are Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana and Tamil Nadu.

The letter instructs states to monitor clusters of new Covid cases and ensure that the spread of infection is contained. The five-fold strategy i.e Test-Track-Treat-Vaccine and Covid Appropriate Behaviour should be followed.

Karnataka on Thursday reported 471 cases, and the positivity rate increased to 2.14 per cent. Bengaluru clocked 458 cases, and has 2,776 active cases. As per BBMP Covid-19 War Room data, ten wards are reporting maximum number of cases -- Bellandur (41), Doddanekkundi (15), Varthur (12), Hagadur (11), Kadugodi (9), HSR Layout (7), Begur (7), Hoodi (8), Horamavu (6) and Garudacharpalya (6).

The number of clusters is increasing, with a total of seven clusters in the city, a majority of which are from apartments in Mahadevapura area. "Genome samples have to be taken from these clusters on priority basis. The state has been asked to maintain an adequate number of tests and send samples from infected individuals for genome sequencing," an official from the department said.

Confirming the instructions, Health Commissioner Randeep D said, "After the recent meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee, we have increased testing targets to 30,000. While the target for Bengaluru will be 20,000, it has been increased to 10,000 in other districts." CONTINUED ON: P3

LAB-O-METER June 8 **13,31,833 doses**
TAKE YOUR SHOT June 9 **13,28,975 doses**
TOTAL: 1,04,74,38,014

NATIONWIDE	JUNE 8	JUNE 9	KARNATAKA	JUNE 8	JUNE 9
Fresh cases	5,233	7,240	Fresh cases	376	471
Recoveries	3,345	3,581	Recoveries	231	214
Deaths	7	8	Deaths	0	0

EXPRESS READ

7 return to class without hijab in Mangaluru

Mangaluru: Seven pro-hijab students, who were suspended from Government First Grade College in Uppinangady, have returned to the college without a headscarf. College principal Shekar M D said their period of suspension ended on Wednesday and they had submitted an apology stating that they will abide by uniform rules. "Out of 101 Muslim girl students, 45 have come back to classes," he said | P4

BBMP submits delimitation draft to govt

Bengaluru: The much-awaited BBMP delimitation draft has been sent to the government for approval. BBMP Special Commissioner, Rangappa S said the Palike Chief Commissioner Gaurav Gupta has submitted the draft to Urban Development Department (UDD). The draft will be examined and 15 days time will be given to people to raise objections. | P2

₹2 cr cash, but no train ticket, man in police net

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Karwar

THIS man was carrying ₹2 crore cash but strangely did not buy a ticket while boarding a train. His lapse landed him in the custody of police who seized the cash that was meant to be delivered in Mangaluru as part of a hawala transaction. The accused is Jen Singh alias Manohar Singh from Varanwa village in Jallor taluk in Suntra district of Rajasthan who boarded the Mangaluru-bound train at Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in Mumbai without a ticket on June 8, 2022.

A ticket collector informed Chief Vigilance officer, H K Prasanna, Konkan Railway Corporation Limited, after he found Jen travelling ticketless. Inspector Vipin Singh Rana was alerted and based on a complaint filed by him, the Karwar Rural Police (KRP) took Jen into custody and seized the cash from him. Rana had searched Jen's bag and found ₹2 crore cash, all in ₹2,000 denomination currency notes, and handed him over to the local police after the train reached Shirawada Railway Station in Karwar. The KRP questioned him about the money and after he failed to give convincing answers, arrested him. A case has been registered.

Government of India

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

Nation Resolves

To Empower 100% People Through Digital Services

- Removal of middlemen and bogus applicants through Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM); More than Rs 22.77 lakh crore transferred directly to bank accounts of beneficiaries
- 'One Nation, One Ration Card' enables getting ration from any of 5.37 lakh ration shops across the country
- Under SVAMITVA scheme, drone survey of land completed in 1.45 lakh villages; 75 lakh property cards issued in more than 44 thousand villages
- India leads the world in digital transactions; UPI transactions worth Rs 177 lakh crore till now
- 4.94 lakh Common Service Centres in operation to fulfill digital needs
- Over 5.70 crore Digital Life Certificates issued to pensioners in a hassle-free manner
- 1.78 lakh villages connected to optical fibre network for faster internet connectivity; 5.74 lakh km of optical fibre cables laid
- GeM portal brings transparency to government procurement; Record purchase of Rs 2.57 lakh crore
- Covid Vaccination process made easy through Co-WIN platform
- DigiLocker eliminates the need to carry physical documents; 11 crore citizens get registered; More than 5.1 billion documents issued

"Digital India is strongly paving the way for the resolve of AatmaNirbhar Bharat. Digital India is connecting even those people with the system who never imagined it. Digital India is a manifestation of a strong India emerging in the 21st century."

— Narendra Modi —

8 Years Seva, Sushasan Garib Kalyan

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